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COMMANDOS DIE HARD

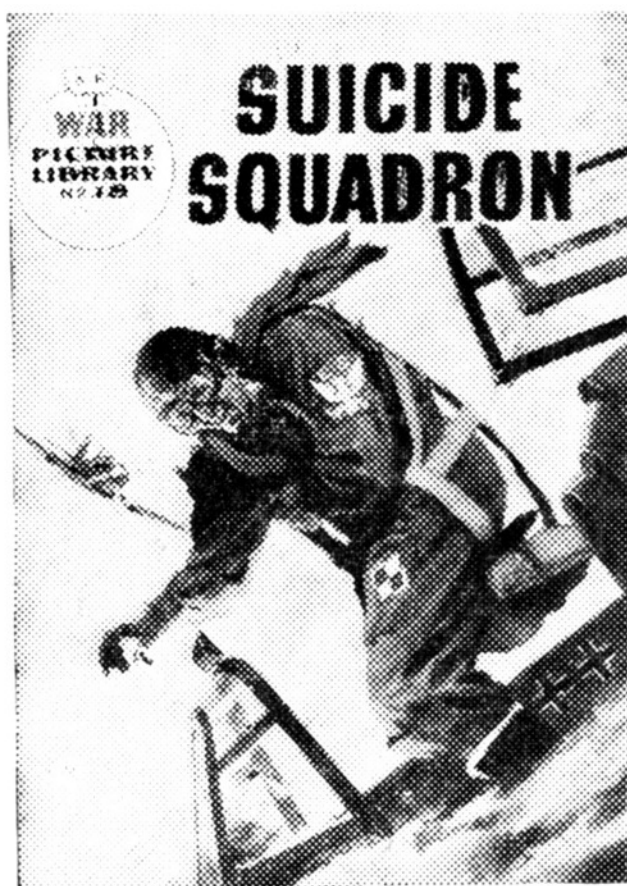


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COMMANDOS DIE HARD

OF ALL THE FIGHTING MEN OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR NONE WERE MORE HATED OR FEARED BY BRITAIN'S ENEMIES THAN THE SOLDIERS AND ROYAL MARINES OF THE COMMANDO BRIGADES... TRAINED ONLY TO ATTACK. THE PROUD WEARERS OF THE GREEN BERET EARNED UNDYING FAME AND GLORY ON BATTLEFIELDS THE WORLD OVER BEFORE THE WAR'S END. WHEREVER THEY RAIDED, WHATEVER THE ODDS, NOTHING COULD DAUNT THEM AS THEY PROVED THAT... **COMMANDOS WERE A SPECIAL BREED OF MEN!**



Chapter 1. **DANGEROUS JOURNEY**

LATE 1942: THE CONVOYS WERE BATTLING THROUGH TO RUSSIA WITH VITAL WAR MATERIAL. ON THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE TO MURMANSK--THE MOST HAZARDOUS SEA PASSAGE IN THE HISTORY OF THE WAR. AS THAT WINTER SET IN ALLIED SHIPS FOUGHT THROUGH RAGING SNOW BLIZZARDS, SEAS INFESTED WITH ICE FLOES. ENEMY SUBMARINES, SURFACE RAIDERS AND, WORST OF ALL... SWARMS OF DIVE BOMBERS AND TORPEDO AIRCRAFT ATTACKED THE CONVOYS FROM GERMAN BASES INSIDE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE IN OCCUPIED NORWAY....



THE GALLANT CONVOY RQ5, AFTER BEATING FOUL WEATHER AND TWO U-BOAT PACKS, WAS FINALLY SHATTERED A FEW MILES FROM ITS PORT OF ARRIVAL BY MARAUDING AIRCRAFT.

WE WIN THROUGH JUST TO MEET UP WITH THESE DEVILS -- AND NOT A BRICK LEFT TO THROW AT THEM! US TWO WEEKS AT SEA ... AND THEM FRESH FROM A HOT BREAKFAST IN NORWAY!

THEY CAN HAVE NORTH CAPE FOR ME UNTIL THEY DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE JERRY AIRCRAFT. SHIPS GO DOWN, GOOD MEN DIE, ALL OUR WORK GOES FOR NOTHING!

THE FIGHTING MEN WERE NOT THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO CONSIDERED SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE TO PROTECT THE CONVOYS FROM THE SAVAGE AIR ATTACKS. IN LONDON, SERVICE CHIEFS MET TO THRASH OUT THE PROBLEM.

ESCORT CARRIERS ARE NOT THE COMPLETE ANSWER TO THESE ATTACKS. AS IN THE CASE OF THE LAST CONVOY, ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS OFTEN FORCE OUR SHIPS TO TURN BACK BEFORE NORTH CAPE. WE ARE DESPERATELY SHORT OF AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AS WELL.

THE RUSSIANS HAVE BOMBED THE AIRFIELD USED BY THE GERMAN SQUADRONS AT NORTH CAPE, BUT IT HAS MADE LITTLE DIFFERENCE TO ITS EFFICIENCY. THE PRIME MINISTER INSISTS SOMETHING HAPPENS TO THAT AIRFIELD BEFORE OUR NEXT CONVOY!



Commandos Die Hard

AN OPPRESSIVE SILENCE FOLLOWED, THEN ONE MAN ROSE DETERMINEDLY TO HIS FEET. HE WAS THE MOST JUNIOR OFFICER PRESENT-- A COLONEL OF THE NEWLY FORMED THIRTEENTH COMMANDO REGIMENT.

I HAVE THE VERY MEN WHO COULD MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN TO THAT AIRFIELD --MORE THAN THE GERMANS WOULD EVER IMAGINE. GENTLEMEN, THE FIGHTING THIRTEENTH OFFER YOU A SPECIAL DEMOLITION UNIT TRAINED FOR WINTER WARFARE. THEY WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO WRECK THE PLACE FOR YOU!

TELL US MORE OF THESE MEN. THEY MAY WELL BE THE ONLY ANSWER WE HAVE!



SOMEWHERE IN SCOTLAND, THREE COMMANDO CHUMS WERE PREPARING FOR LEAVE. THEY WERE HUGE CORPORAL ED. NELSON, D.C.M., EX-GRENADIER GUARDS; MARINE PIERRE LAFARGE, LATE OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION; AND SMALL, LEAN-FEATURED PRIVATE "BRAINS" FULLER. AN UNWELCOME VISITOR ENTERED THEIR BILLET.....



NO LEAVE FOR YOU LUCKY LADS. YOU'RE GOING ON A LITTLE TRIP... AND I RECKON THERE'LL BE SOME NICE GERMANS AROUND TO WELCOME YOU WHEN YOU ARRIVE!

... AND IN NORTHERN NORWAY, AT THE GERMAN AIR BASE, HAMMERFEST, A PORTLY LUFTWAFFE GENERAL CONGRATULATED THE STATION COMMANDER ON RECENT SUCCESSES...

THE FUEHRER IS DELIGHTED WITH THE WORK OF YOUR SQUADRONS, COLONEL ZIMMER! YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED WHERE THE GERMAN NAVY HAS FAILED. SOON THE BRITISH WILL NOT DARE TO ATTEMPT THE NORTHERN ROUTE TO RUSSIA. THE FATHERLAND SALUTES YOU!

TELL OUR LEADER THE CONVOYS WILL CEASE! NOTHING CAN STOP US... WE WILL SMASH EVERY ATTEMPT THE BRITISH MAKE TO REACH RUSSIA WITH SUPPLIES!

OUTSIDE THE SQUADRON OFFICE, TWO GERMAN SENTRIES TALKED AS THEY GUARDED THE AIRCRAFT WHICH WERE THE SCOURGE OF THE RUSSIAN RUN...

ACH, KURT! WE WASTE OUR TIME. NO ONE COULD ATTACK US HERE... IT IS THE VERY END OF THE EARTH!

LET THEM COME, ANYWAY. IT WOULD BE SUICIDE! THEY WOULD LEAVE THEIR BONES HERE -- AND PERHAPS WE WOULD EARN A GOOD LEAVE IN GERMANY...

Commandos Die Hard

BUT IN ENGLAND PLANS WERE ALREADY BEING LAID. A SPECIAL DEMOLITION SQUAD OF THE THIRTEENTH COMMANDO HEARD OF THE GERMAN AIRFIELD AT A HURRIEDLY-ARRANGED BRIEFING... WITH THE NEXT NORTHERN CONVOY ALREADY MUSTERED, IT WAS TIME FOR AN ATTACK



SO THE PICKED MEN OF THE FIGHTING THIRTEENTH WENT TO WAR -- BY SUBMARINE, WITH FIVE COLLAPSIBLE RAFTS WHICH WERE HURRIEDLY STOWED BELOW. . .

MAKING SAILFISH A BLOOMING TROOP CARRIER NOW, IT SEEMS. WHAT'S THIS LOT UP TO?



THE COMMANDOS WERE DETAILED TO A FORWARD MESS-DESK... THE CRAMPED SPARE TORPEDOES COMPARTMENT.

MAKE WAY FOR THE HEROIC COMMANDOS! THEY'VE COME TO SHOW US HOW TO FIGHT...



LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE OFF FOR THE WINTER SPORTS SEASON. SORRY, MATES, SAILFISH AIN'T GOING TO SWITZERLAND THIS TRIP!

THIS ONE CAN SLEEP IN THE CAT'S HAMMOCK!

SHALL WE TAKE THEM, ED?

NOT WORTH IT... NOT ENOUGH OF 'EM! BRAINS'LL SOON SHOW THAT BEARDED WONDER.



Commandos Die Hard

FULLER SUDDENLY WENT INTO ACTION. USING A SIMPLE JUDO TRICK, HE HURLED THE HUGE SAILOR TO THE DECK.

SORRY ABOUT THAT, OLD CHAP!

I THINK MAYBE WE ALL UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER NOW, EH?



LET'S MAKE OURSELVES AT HOME.

IN RECORD TIME, BEFORE A SERIOUS GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICERS WATCHING FROM THE SUBMARINE PARENT SHIP, *SAILFISH* NOSED SEAWARD FROM THE SCOTTISH HARBOUR... DESTINATION ENEMY TERRITORY!



WEATHER'S BREAKING... TO DO THEIR MISSION BEFORE THE NEXT CONVOY REACHES NORTH CAPE WILL MEAN SURFACE SAILING MOST OF THE TIME. THEY'RE IN FOR A VERY ROUGH TRIP! I PITY THOSE SOLDIERS....

MY BOYS ARE TOUGH. I ALMOST PITY THOSE GERMANS AT HAMMERFEST!

FOR SEVERAL DAYS THE SUBMARINE GRIMLY BATTLED HER WAY THROUGH MOUNTAINOUS SEAS, SUBMERGING ONLY IN THE DIREST EMERGENCIES, USING MAXIMUM SURFACE SPEED.

WISH THE SKIPPER WOULD LET US SUBMERGE. DOES HE THINK WE'RE A BLINKING DESTROYER?

HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING. GOT TO MAKE ALL THE SPEED WE CAN THIS TRIP ...



THE COMMANDOS HAD FOUND IT NO PLEASURE CRUISE!

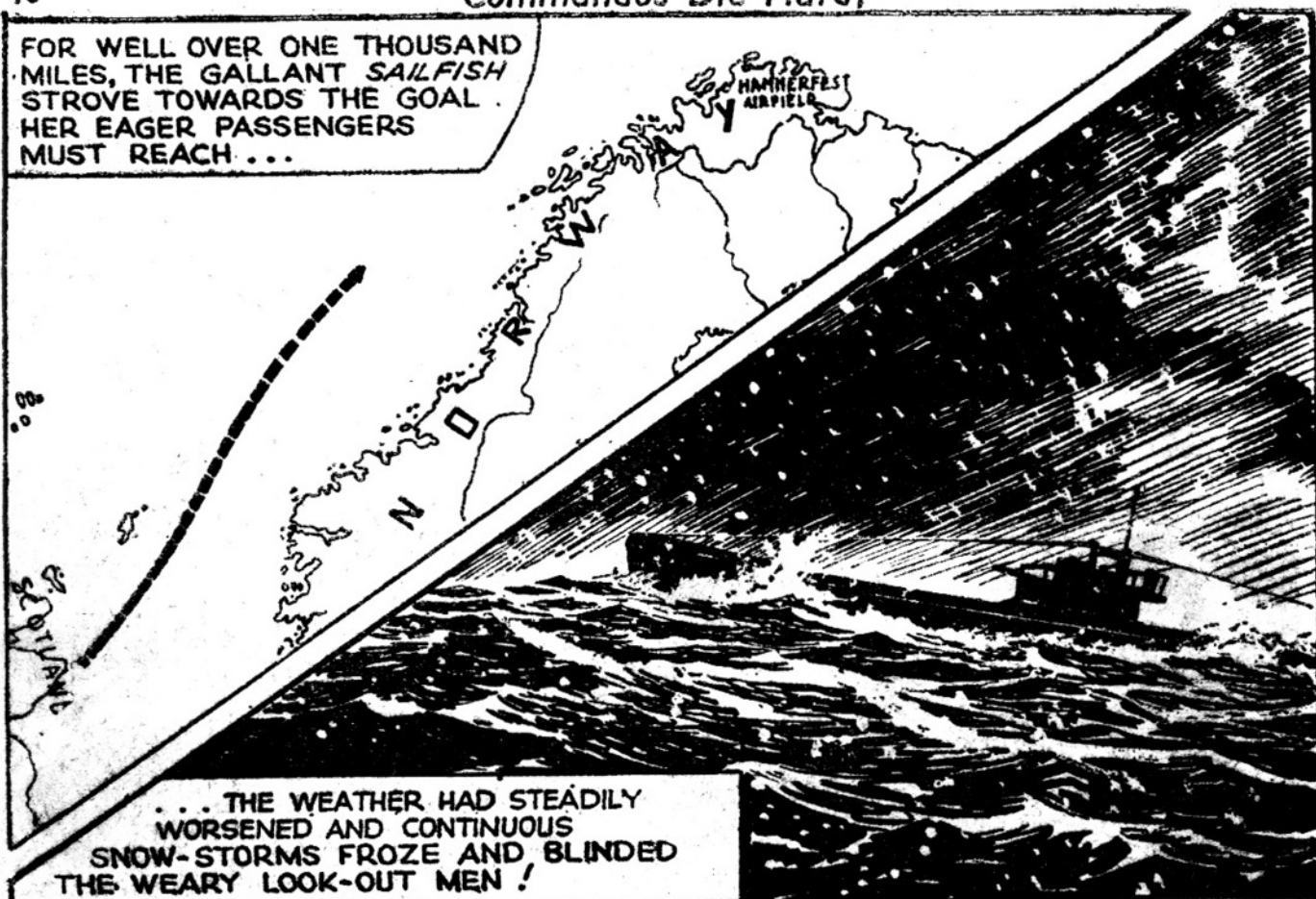
WHAT'S UP, BOYS? DON'T YOU LIKE CRUISING?

WAIT TILL WE MEET SOME WEATHER!



AFTER THIS IT WILL BE A PLEASURE TO MEET THOSE GERMANS ...

FOR WELL OVER ONE THOUSAND MILES, THE GALLANT SAILFISH STROVE TOWARDS THE GOAL. HER EAGER PASSENGERS MUST REACH ...



... THE WEATHER HAD STEADILY WORSENERD AND CONTINUOUS SNOW-STORMS FROZE AND BLINDED THE WEARY LOOK-OUT MEN!

... BUT DURING ONE BRIEF BREAK IN THE STORM, THE SNOW-BLINDED LOOK-OUT RUBBED RED-RIMMED EYES AS HE STARED AT A MOST UNWELCOME SIGHT ...



DESTROYER, RED FORTY-FIVE, SIR! ALMOST CERTAINLY GERMAN WOLFE CLASS ...

CLEAR THE BRIDGE! EMERGENCY DIVE! DIVE... DIVE!

THE ENEMY LOOK-OUTS HAD KEPT A TAUT WATCH AS WELL ...

HERR KAPITAN!
UNTERSEEBOOT!
STARBOARD
QUARTER...

THERE ARE NO U-BOATS
IN THIS AREA. ORDER FULL
SPEED, HERR LEUTNANT.
SOUND ACTION STATIONS!



WELL DRILLED FOR SUDDEN ACTION
THE VETERAN CREW OF *SAILFISH*
HAD ALREADY BEGUN THEIR
DIVE TO SAFETY ...



UNDER
ALREADY! SKIPPER
WASTES NO TIME...
HALF THE BLOOMING
ARCTIC OCEAN DOWN
MY NECK!

THE COMMANDOS IN THE FORWARD
COMPARTMENT HEARD THE DIVING
ORDER WITH MIXED FEELINGS.

CLOSE ALL
WATERTIGHT
DOORS! DEPTH-
CHARGE ROUTINE!



AT LEAST WE'LL
NOT BE TOSSED
AROUND BY THE
SEA FOR A WHILE.

NO, MY PETIT
FRIEND. THE ENEMY
WILL NOW DO THAT
INSTEAD!

THE GERMAN DESTROYER RACED THROUGH THE SEA INTENT UPON MAKING A QUICK AND CERTAIN KILL.

THEY ARE OLD HANDS AT ESCAPING TROUBLE, HERR KAPITAN. ALREADY THEY HAVE MADE THEIR DIVE!

BUT STILL NOT FAST ENOUGH TO ESCAPE US. WE WILL BLOW THEM OUT OF THE SEA!

SAILFISH CONTINUED HER DESPERATE PLUNGE INTO THE ICY DEPTHS ...

SEVENTY-FIVE FEET, SIR!

LET'S HOPE WE GET TO TWO-HUNDRED FEET AT LEAST BEFORE THEY START DROPPING ASH-CANS ABOUT OUR EARS!

THE DESTROYER ROARED OVERHEAD WITH AN EAR AND NERVE SHATTERING NOISE... LIEUTENANT JOHN GRANGE, COMMANDER OF SAILFISH, KNEW THEIR ORDEAL WAS JUST BEGINNING.

I HOPE OUR PASSENGERS WON'T MIND A LITTLE NOISE...

GOOD LUCK

THIS IS NO WAY TO FIGHT GERMANS... THESE SAILORS REALLY HAVE TO DO IT THE HARD WAY!

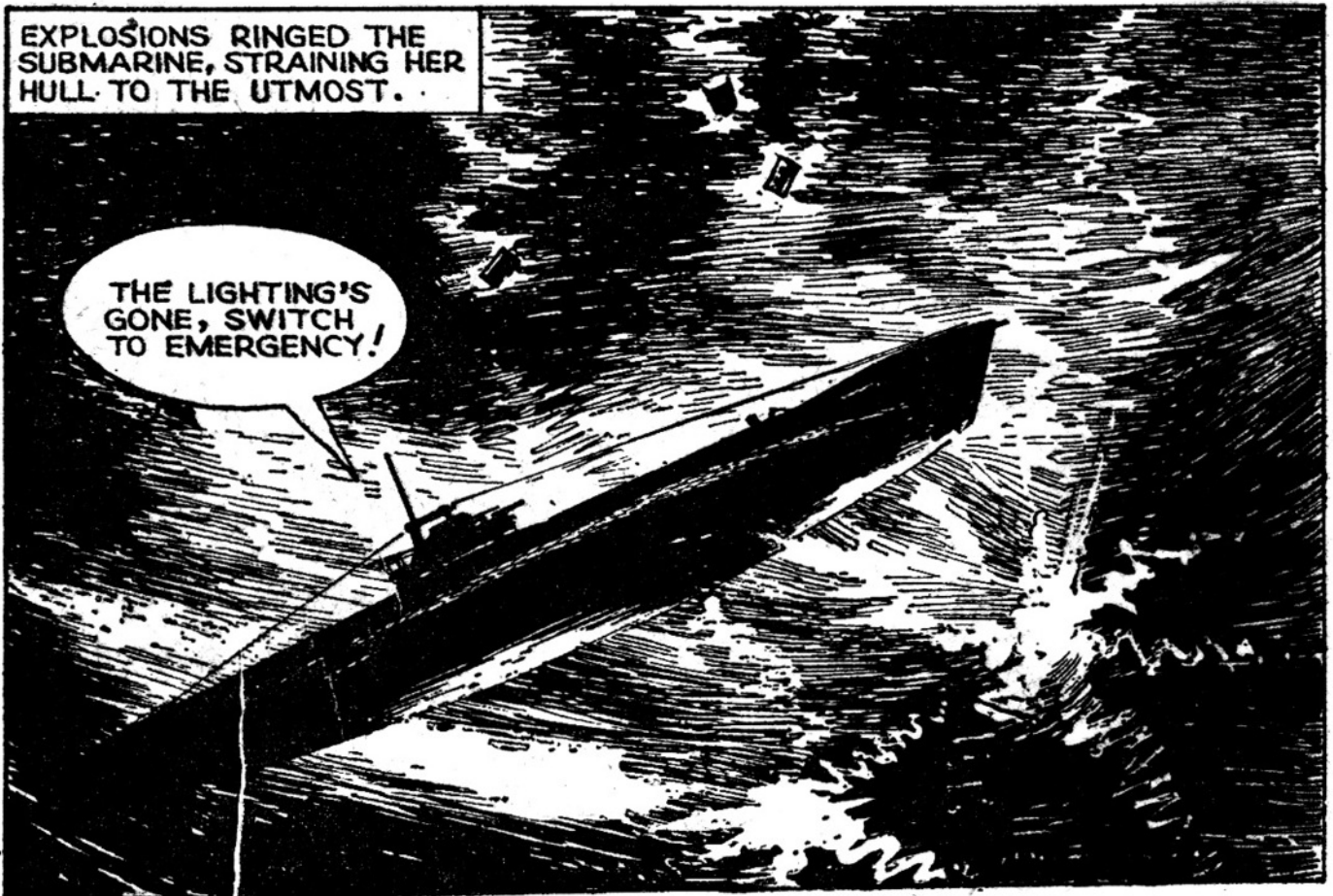


THE FIRST DEADLY PATTERN
OF GERMAN DEPTH-CHARGES
WERE HURLED INTO THE SEA...



EXPLOSIONS RINGED THE
SUBMARINE, STRAINING HER
HULL TO THE UTMOST.

THE LIGHTING'S
GONE, SWITCH
TO EMERGENCY!



THE TORTURED *SAILFISH* HAD BEEN FLUNG ALMOST ON HER BEAM-ENDS BY THE ACCURATE ATTACK FROM ABOVE. WITH A GRINDING OF STRAINED METAL, VALVES THROUGHOUT THE BOAT BURST, AND SEAMS SPLIT OPEN TO THE SEA...



MEANWHILE, IN THE SPARE TORPEDOES COMPARTMENT, YET ANOTHER DANGER HAD BEEN CREATED BY THE DEPTH-CHARGING.



THE WARNING CAME TOO LATE ... THE NEXT PATTERN EXPLODED CLOSE TO THE HULL, FREEING TWO OF THE TORPEDOES. THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FROM THE LOCKED COMPARTMENT ...



MERCIFULLY, IN THE PAUSE BEFORE THE NEXT ATTACK, THE DECK STEADIED.

HURRY, LADS! MUST SECURE THESE THINGS BEFORE THE NEXT ATTACK.



THE DAMAGED *SAILFISH* FOUGHT A LOSING BATTLE TO KEEP FROM PLUMMETING TO THE COLD DEPTHS OF THE ARCTIC OCEAN...

FOUR HUNDRED FEET, SIR! STILL DIVING RAPIDLY!

TAKING IN SEA AFT, SIR! WE CAN'T STOP HER GOING DOWN UNLESS WE BLOW TANKS...

THEN *SURFACE!* WE'LL MAKE A FIGHT OF IT!

FOLLOWING LIEUTENANT GRANGE'S ORDER TO BLOW TANKS, *SAILFISH* ROSE SLUGGISHLY TO PERISCOPE DEPTH.

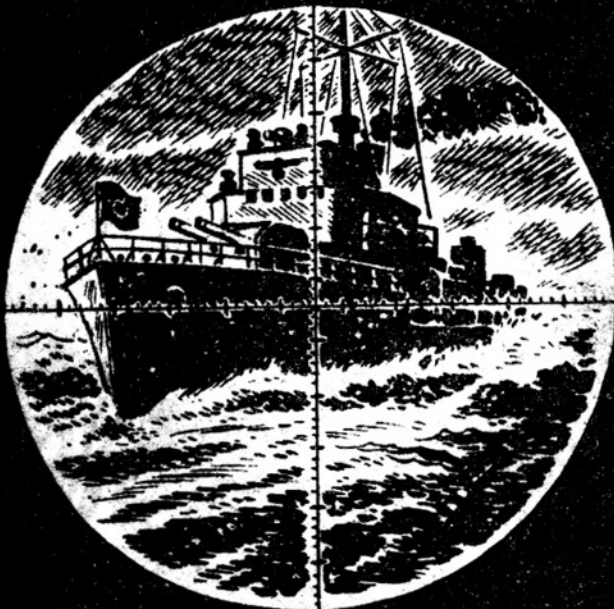
UP PERISCOPE! MAINTAIN PRESENT DEPTH...STAND BY WITH TORPEDOES!

BOW TUBES LOADED AND READY FOR FIRING, SIR!

THE GERMAN DESTROYER CIRCLED THE AREA FOR HER FINAL RUN...

SCHNELL! SCHNELL! THIS TIME WE SINK THE BRITISH PIRATE!

...BUT, THROUGH HIS PERISCOPE, GRANGE SAW A SIGHT HE HAD PRAYED TO BE PRESENTED WITH ...



THE ENEMY HAD OFFERED HERSELF AS A TARGET!



WHAT LUCK! STAND BY BOW TORPEDOES ... FIRE ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR!

GRANGE HELD HIS BREATH AS HIS FIRST THREE SNAP SHOTS PASSED HARMLESSLY BEFORE THE DESTROYER'S BOW...THEN THE FINAL TORPEDO CRASHED INTO THE GERMAN AND RIPPED HER APART IN ONE SEARING, SHATTERING EXPLOSION.



SAILFISH HAD NO TIME FOR JUBILATION. SHE WAS BADLY DAMAGED... AND HER MISSION HAD YET TO BE ACCOMPLISHED!

WE GOT HER!

BELAY THAT NONSENSE! FULL AHEAD ON PREVIOUS COURSE... WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO!

DAMAGE CONTROL HAVE STOPPED LEAKAGE AFT, SIR... WE'RE STILL IN BUSINESS!

AT THAT MOMENT, CAPTAIN SELBY, LEADER OF THE COMMANDO PARTY, EMERGED FROM THE WARDROOM, DRAWN BY THE SOUNDS OF CHEERING.

I'D LIKE TO VISIT MY MEN NOW, IF YOUR PRIVATE WAR IS OVER.

OF COURSE. HOPE THEY DIDN'T MIND IT TOO MUCH. WATERTIGHT DOORS ARE BEING OPENED

BUT THE CHEERFUL ATMOSPHERE IN THE CONTROL ROOM VANISHED ABRUPTLY AS A SAILOR BROKE NEWS OF THE PASSENGERS IN THE FORWARD COMPARTMENT ...

CAPTAIN, SIR! TROUBLE FORWARD! SPARE FISH BROKE LOOSE DURING ATTACK... CASUALTIES AMONG TROOPS!

FIRST-AID PARTY! TO THOSE MEN AT THE DOUBLE!

THE SUBMARINE CAPTAIN AND COMMANDO OFFICER HURRIED ANXIOUSLY TO THE FORWARD COMPARTMENT.

HOW BAD IS IT, NELSON?

TWELVE INJURED, SIR. TWO SERIOUSLY. BROKEN AND CRUSHED LIMBS AND RIBS...



THE INJURED COMMANDOS WERE REMOVED TO THE TINY SICK-BAY. GRIMLY THE SURVIVORS STOOD IN LINE BEFORE THE TWO SERIOUS OFFICERS.

WE'LL REACH YOUR LANDFALL WITHIN TWELVE HOURS... DOES THE OPERATION CONTINUE AFTER THIS?

IT MUST! OUR PLAN OF ATTACK WILL HAVE TO BE REVISED... BUT THE OPERATION MUST GO ON!



THE COMMANDOS NODDED ASSENT AS ONE MAN. THEY HAD NOT THOUGHT OF GIVING UP!

"WE CAN STILL SHOW 'EM, SIR!"

INDEED, IT WILL BE A PLEASURE TO SEE WHAT ONE HAS TO FIGHT!

THE FEWER MEN THE BETTER CHANCE, IN MY OPINION!

LIEUTENANT GRANGE WAS LEFT IN NO DOUBT THAT THE MEN BEFORE HIM WOULD TACKLE ANY TASK.

THEN THE DAWN LANDING AT THE FIORD GOES ON AS PLANNED! BETTER PREPARE YOURSELVES WITH A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP. I'LL SEE THAT YOU LEAVE WITH THE BEST MEAL UNDER YOUR BELTS THAT SAILFISH'S COOK HAS EVER MUSTERED.

NOT A CASE OF THE CONDEMNED MEN ATE HEARTY BREAKFASTS, I HOPE, SIR!

Chapter 2. WAR ON SKIS



WITHIN MINUTES, THE LITTLE BOATS HAD PADDLED AWAY FROM THE SUBMARINE.

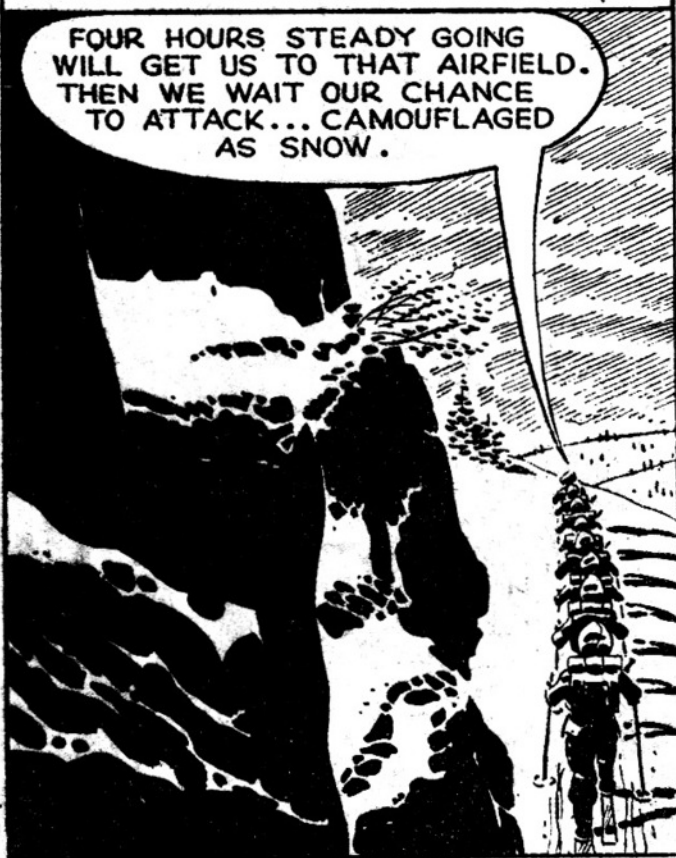


THE COMMANDOS WERE SOON STANDING ON THE WHITE FROZEN WASTE THAT WAS NORTHERN NORWAY. THE FOLDING BOATS WERE BURIED UNDER DEEP SNOW...



...SO THE SECRET TREK TO HAMMERFEST STARTED...

FOUR HOURS STEADY GOING WILL GET US TO THAT AIRFIELD. THEN WE WAIT OUR CHANCE TO ATTACK... CAMOUFLAGED AS SNOW.



EVERY MAN WAS AN EXPERT SKIER. GOOD PROGRESS WAS MADE...



A FEW MILES AWAY, COLONEL ZIMMER OF THE LUFTWAFFE WAS ENTERTAINING HIS PILOTS IN THE OFFICERS MESS AT HAMMERFEST AIRFIELD.

GENTLEMEN WARRIORS OF THE GLORIOUS THIRD REICH! THE BRITISH FOOLS HAVE SENT US ANOTHER CONVOY TO SMASH... TOMORROW IT WILL BE WITHIN RANGE OF OUR AIRCRAFT. I GIVE YOU A TOAST... *GOOD HUNTING!*



THE ELATED GERMAN PILOTS LEAPED TO THEIR FEET AT THE NEWS ...

MAY OUR SUCCESS BE EVEN GREATER THAN THE LAST CRUSHING DEFEAT WE INFLICTED ON BRITISH SHIPPING!

THAT IS BOUND TO HAPPEN! NOW LET US DINE AND THEN SLEEP LONG. TOMORROW WE SHALL EARN FRESH GLORY!



THERE WAS NO SUMPTUOUS MEAL FOR CAPTAIN SELBY AND HIS MEN. CROUCHED TOGETHER FOR WARMTH IN A SNOW HOLLOW, THEY CHEWED ON IRON RATIONS.

TIME UP! WE'VE GOT A DATE TO KEEP WITH SOME JERRIES. SOON WE'LL SIGHT HAMMERFEST FIORD. THEN THEY'LL WONDER WHAT'S HIT 'EM!



AS THEY PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE JOURNEY, ONE OF THE COMMANDOS SLIPPED OFF HIS HEAVY MITTS TO ADJUST A SKI STRAP...

PUT ON YOUR GLOVES, YOU FOOL! NO ONE REMOVES CLOTHING UP HERE... *IT MEANS CERTAIN FROSTBITE!* WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE MORE MEN!



... BUT THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMANDOS WAS AT THAT MOMENT SWITCHED TO AN EVEN GREATER MENACE THAN FROSTBITE!

SOMEONE ON THE RIDGE, SIR!

JERRIES, BY THUNDER!

EVERYBODY DOWN! TAKE COVER IN THE SNOW!

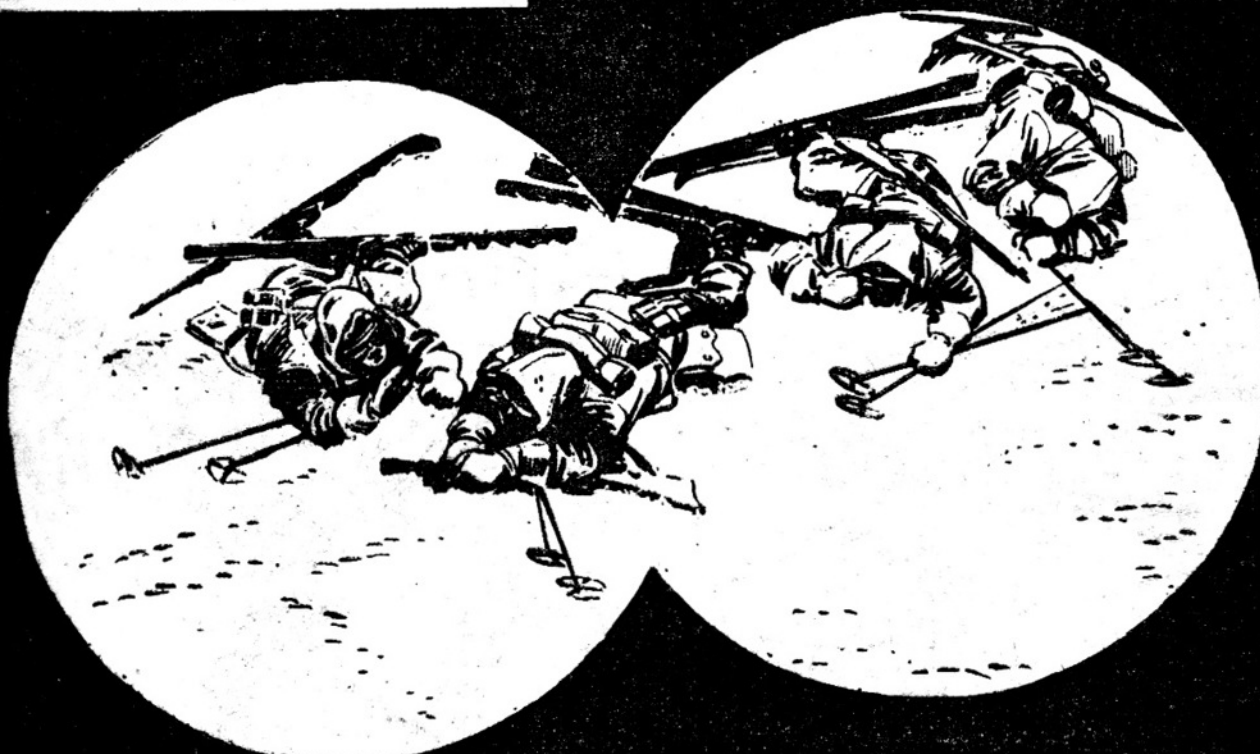


THE ILL-FORTUNE THAT HAD DOGGED THE LITTLE GROUP CONTINUED. THE COMMANDOS HAD CROSSED PATHS WITH AN ENEMY MOUNTAIN BATTALION ENGAGED IN SKI TRAINING!

HERR MAJOR!
I SWEAR I SAW
MOVEMENTS IN
THE SNOW
BELOW US!



THE GERMAN MAJOR SWEEPED THE AREA BELOW WITH POWERFUL BINOCULARS. HIS GAZE CAME TO REST ON



...THE COMMANDOS HUGGED THE SNOW, DESPERATELY HOPING AGAINST DISCOVERY.

IF THEY'VE SEEN US -- STAND BY FOR HOT ACTION ...

ANYTHING HOT WOULD BE WELCOME IN THIS PLACE, MY FRIEND!



THE GERMAN MAJOR ISSUED CURT ORDERS TO THE WAITING OFFICERS ...:



COMPANY COMMANDERS TAKE POST... WE ARE INVESTIGATING MEN BELOW. SHOOT TO KILL IF THEY TRY TO ESCAPE! COULD BE NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE SWINE!

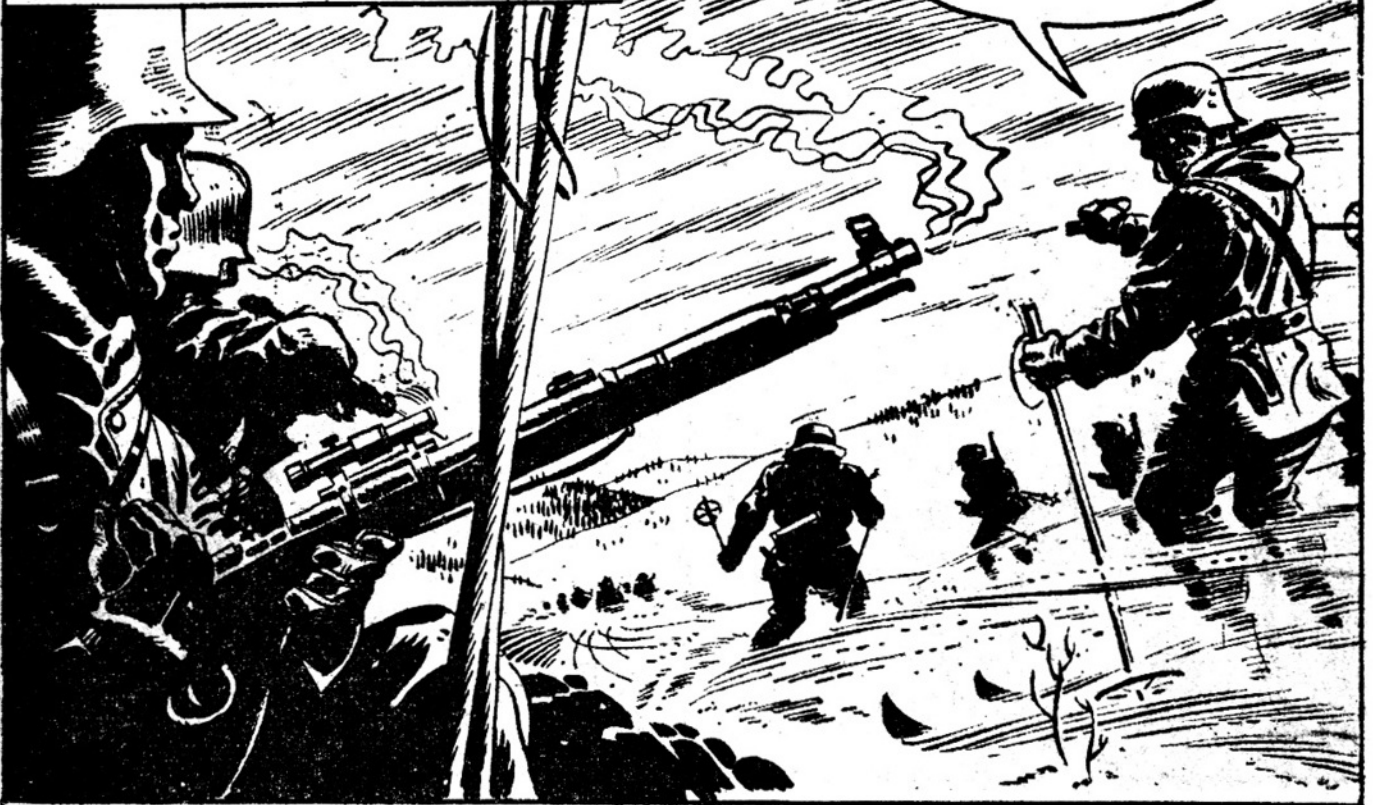
A WHOLE BATTALION AGAINST EIGHT MEN! THE GERMAN HORDE SWEEPED DOWN FROM THE CREST!

DOWN THE HILL AT THE DOUBLE, MEN! WE CAN'T AFFORD A FIGHT YET!



RELENTLESSLY, THE EXPERTS AMONG THE GERMAN TROOPS NARROWED THE GAP BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE FLEEING COMMANDOS

THEY MUST NOT
ESCAPE ... SHOOT
THE DOGS DOWN!



ACCURATE RIFLE FIRE TOOK A TOLL BEFORE THE COMMANDOS COULD REACH THE NEXT RIDGE... AND TEMPORARY SAFETY.

CAPTAIN'S
STOPPED
ONE!



MORTALLY WOUNDED, CAPTAIN SELBY'S ONLY THOUGHT WAS FOR THE MISSION HE KNEW MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED...

THEY'RE NOT SO KEEN TO TAKE US NOW!

LEAVE ME -- I'M DONE FOR! CORPORAL NELSON... TAKE THE LEAD! YOU MUST GO ON... UUUGH!

CONCENTRATED FIRE FROM THE COMMANDOS HAD HALTED THE FRONTAL ATTACK... BUT THEY WERE BEING OUTFLANKED!

CORPORAL! MEN ARE ENCIRCLING US!

LET 'EM ALL COME! WE'LL FINISH TWENTY FOR EACH ONE OF US!



CAPTAIN SELBY DID NOT MEAN HIS MEN TO DIE NEEDLESSLY. WITH A SUPERHUMAN EFFORT HE DRAGGED HIS REVOLVER FROM ITS HOLSTER...

FOOLS! REMEMBER OUR MISSION!
NELSON -- TAKE MY MAP CASE ...
GET THESE MEN TO THAT AIRFIELD!
I'LL SHOOT ANYONE WHO DOESN'T
WITHDRAW -- *AND QUICK!*



EVEN IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, NELSON REALISED THE WISDOM OF HIS DYING OFFICER'S ACTION...

LET'S GIVE
'EM A RUN.
FORWARD,
MEN!

WE'LL GIVE
YOU A START,
LADS!



YET ANOTHER MAN WENT DOWN UNDER THE HEAVY FIRE THAT FOLLOWED THE ESCAPING COMMANDOS. NOW JUST THE THREE FRIENDS REMAINED OF THE ORIGINAL PARTY OF TWENTY!

THEY'VE HIT BILL!

REMEMBER OUR LAST ORDER... WE CAN'T STOP NOW!



HARD-PRESSED BY THE ENEMY, A PAUSE WOULD HAVE MEANT CERTAIN DEATH.

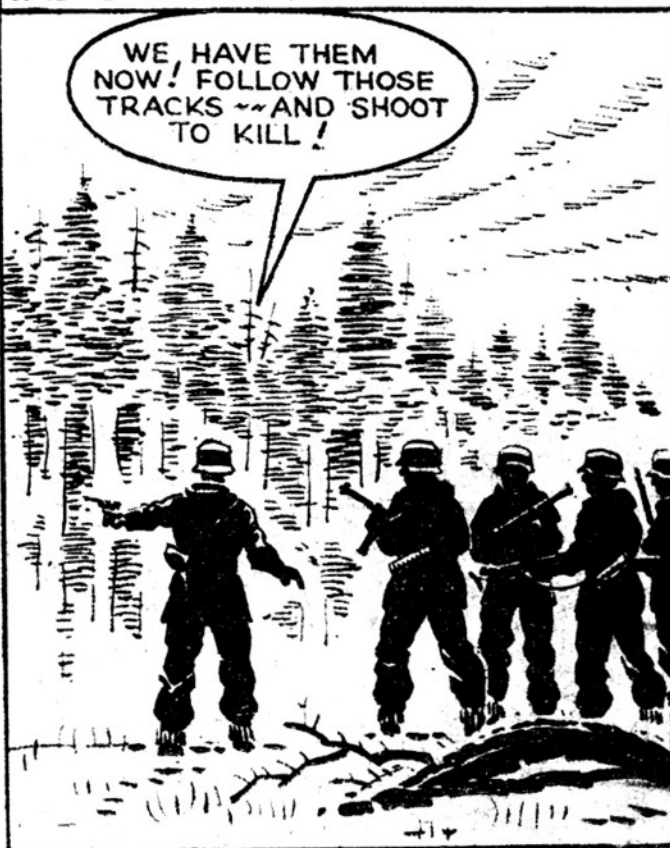
INTO THOSE TREES! WE'LL TRY AND DODGE 'EM IN THERE!



LIKE HUNTED ANIMALS, THE THREE SURVIVORS HURRIED DEEP INTO THE SHELTER OF THE SNOW-LADEN FIRS ...



BUT THE TELL-TALE MARKS OF THE SKIS HAD GIVEN THE COMMANDOS AWAY ...



THE GOING BECAME HARDER. LAFARGE FLOUNDERED WAIST DEEP IN THE SOFT SNOW OF A LITTLE CLEARING. THE RESOLUTE PURSUERS DREW CLOSER ...



WHILE NELSON, WITH A GIANT'S STRENGTH, EXTRICATED LAFARGE, FULLER, A CRACK SHOT, GAVE THE GERMANS A LESSON IN CALM, DELIBERATE SHOOTING.

FOOLS! SHOOT THEM DOWN! ARE YOU SUCH COWARDS?

GREAT SHOOTING, BRAINS!



UNDER THE WHIP-LASH OF THEIR OFFICER'S TONGUE, THE NAZI TROOPS ATTACKED.

WELL! WELL! THEY'VE DECIDED TO PLAY... MAKE EVERY SHOT COUNT!

OBVIOUSLY THEIR OFFICER IS A FOOL! THIS IS TOO EASY!



THE GROUPED COMMANDOS LOOSED A WITHERING BLAST OF BULLETS!

THIS IS FOR MY GOOD FRIENDS WHO ARE NO LONGER WITH US!



THE GERMANS WHO ESCAPED THE FUSILLADE RETREATED TO THE TREES ...



THAT'S SATISFIED THEM!
LET'S PUSH ON BEFORE
THE NEXT BATCH ARRIVES.

WITH DUE RESPECT,
CORP., THIS IS WHERE
BRAINS COME BEFORE
BRAWN! MAY I SAY
WHAT I THINK?



LET THE INFANT
SPEAK, CORPORAL!
HE HAS BEEN KNOWN
TO USE HIS HEAD
BEFORE!

I'LL LISTEN...
BUT HE'D
BETTER MAKE
IT SNAPPY!

BRIEFLY, BRAINS FULLER EXPOUNDED
HIS PLAN...



IF WE PUSH ON, ALL
THEY HAVE TO DO IS
FOLLOW OUR TRACKS...
LET'S TURN BACK AND
MINGLE WITH 'EM!

...SO THE THREE HUNTED MEN.
HEADED TOWARDS THE
ENEMY!

WE'LL LOSE
OURSELVES AMONG
THOSE TRACKS, THEN
CUT NORTH AGAIN!

KEEP YOUR EYES
PEELED AND YOUR
WEAPONS READY...
I DON'T WANT TO
SHAKE HANDS WITH
ANY SQUAREHEADS!



A GRIM GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK
CONTINUED FOR WELL OVER AN HOUR...

HERR MAJOR...
ER... THEY HAVE
VANISHED INTO
THIN AIR... LIKE
GHOSTS!

WE'VE FOXED
'EM! GOOD FOR
YOU, BRAINS!

AH! SUCH A
TARGET! MY
FINGERS' ITCH!



Commandos Die Hard

THE COMMANDOS LEFT THE WOOD UNDETECTED. BUT AS THEY RESTED BENEATH A CORNICE OF SNOW THEY FOUND THE SEARCH CONTINUING.



RESTED AND REFRESHED, NELSON NOW TURNED TO THE BUSINESS AHEAD...

ALL CLEAR BELOW, CORPORAL. THEY'VE GONE TO SEARCH ELSEWHERE, THE FOOLS!



THEN IT'S NEXT STOP HAMMERFEST AIRFIELD! THERE WE GET OUR OWN BACK!

Chapter 3. IN ENEMY GUISE

THE THREE DETERMINED MEN MADE GOOD PROGRESS. SOON THEY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF KIRCHEN VILLAGE, A STRAGGLE OF WOODEN HOUSES NOT FAR FROM THEIR AIRFIELD OBJECTIVE!



WE'LL GIVE THIS PLACE A WIDE BERTH THOSE HUNS CAN SEARCH ALL NIGHT IF THEY LIKE!

BUT ENEMY EYES WERE UPON THE COMMANDOS



WUNDERBAR!
THE ENGLANDERS!
TO CAPTURE THEM WOULD
MEAN FELDWEBEL'S
CHEVRONS FOR ME!

THE LONE GERMAN SOLDIER CREPT SILENTLY FORWARD. HE ROSE TO HIS FEET BUT YARDS BELOW THE UNSUSPECTING COMMANDOS...



RAISE YOUR ARMS, ENGLANDERS! ONE TRICK AND I KILL YOU ALL! LEAVE YOUR WEAPONS AND SKIS... YOU WILL NOT NEED THEM NOW!

CAPTURED! LAFARGE'S EYES BLAZED HATRED AT THE THOUGHT!



I COULD HAVE CUT HIM DOWN! WHY DID YOU STOP ME?

...CAN'T RISK A SHOT HERE -- WOULD BRING 'EM ALL RUNNING... WE'LL HAVE TO TRAP THIS HUN SOME OTHER WAY!

THE ELATED GERMAN MARCHED HIS PRISONERS THROUGH THE SNOW GULLY TOWARDS THE VILLAGE...



AT THE NEXT BEND... I'M GOING TO JUMP HIM!

BUT, UNEXPECTEDLY, HELP CAME TO SAVE NELSON THE DANGEROUS TASK OF SURPRISING HIS CAPTOR.



NO FELDWEBEL'S CHEVRONS FOR THE GERMAN NOW! HE DROPPED MOTIONLESS TO THE SNOW.

WELCOME TO NORWAY!
I AM NILS LARSEN...YOU
SEEMED TO NEED A
LITTLE HELP!



LUCKILY FOR THE COMMANDOS, LARSEN HAD HEARD THE NOISE OF THE RUNNING FIGHT EARLIER AND HAD INVESTIGATED. HEARING NELSON'S STORY, HE PROMISED FURTHER HELP.

BEYOND THAT MOUNTAIN IS HAMMERFEST. IT IS NOT THE EASY WAY--BUT IT IS THE SHORTEST AND SAFEST! NO GERMAN WOULD SUSPECT YOU OF TRYING IT. AND I WILL GUIDE YOU...IF YOU CARE TO RISK THE CLIMB.

WE'LL TRY ANYTHING
ONCE! JUST SHOW US
THAT JERRY AIRFIELD!



LARSEN HAD SPOKEN THE TRUTH...
IT WAS NOT THE EASY WAY!



AFTER THIS
EFFORT, ANYTHING
WILL BE EASY!

SWIFTLY AND EXPERTLY THE
NORWEGIAN PATRIOT GUIDED HIS
NEW FRIENDS TO THE SUMMIT...
THERE, AT LAST, THE COMMANDOS
SAW THE ISLAND OF HAMMERFEST.



WE OWE YOU
A GREAT DEAL,
LARSEN!

SINCE NINETEEN-FORTY
I HAVE BEEN FIGHTING
GERMANS! IT IS AN
HONOUR TO HELP
BRAVE MEN!

SO THAT'S
WHERE THE
CONVOY
ATTACKERS
COME FROM.
LET'S GET
AT 'EM!

THE FOUR MEN SKIED RAPIDLY
TOWARDS THE SNOW PLAIN
BELOW

THIS IS
THE PART
I LIKE!

.... BUT SUDDENLY LAFARGE'S LEFT
SKI SNAPPED! HE WAS CATAPULTED
HEADLONG INTO A MOUND OF SNOW...



LAFARGE'S FALL CAUSED A MINOR AVALANCHE THAT COVERED THE FRENCHMAN COMPLETELY. HIS COMRADES TORE AT THE SNOW DESPERATELY....



THE BURIED MAN'S LEGS CAME TO LIGHT. MORE FURIOUS DIGGING PRODUCED A STILL-GRINNING LAFARGE!



BUT WHEN THE GALLANT FRENCHMAN ROSE TO PROVE HIS WORDS... HE STOOD SHIVERING VIOLENTLY...



THE GRIM WORDS OF THE EXPERIENCED NORWEGIAN HORRIFIED THE TOUGH COMMANDOS ...

IT WOULD BE SUICIDE TO LIGHT A FIRE -- EVEN IF WE COULD!

I KNOW OF A FISHERMAN'S SHACK NEARBY. THE OWNER WAS TAKEN TO GERMANY. WE *MUST* GO THERE!

LARSEN GUIDED THE MEN TO THE EMPTY HUT WHERE THEY RESTED WHILE LAFARGE'S CLOTHES WERE DRIED. BUT LATER THERE CAME AN INTERRUPTION ...

WE HAVE VISITORS... FOUR OF THE ENEMY! THEY ARE IN FOR A SURPRISE!

THE ARRIVING GERMANS WERE NEWCOMERS TO NORWAY, MERELY OUT FOR SOME OFF-DUTY SKI-ING.

I AM NUMB WITH COLD. LET'S CALL UPON THIS NORWEGIAN AND BORROW HIS FIRE!

JA! AND ANY FOOD AND DRINK HE MAY HAVE... HA! HA!

BUT THE VISITORS FOUND MORE THAN THEY BARGAINED FOR IN THE SEEMINGLY PEACEFUL COTTAGE ...

REACH,
SQUAREHEADS!
ONE MOVE AND
WE BLAST!

DONNERWETTER!
WE ARE *KAPUT*!

THE STARTLED GERMANS WERE HERDED INTO A CORNER OF THE ROOM. BRAINS FULLER INSPECTED THEM WITH GREAT INTEREST.

THESE ARE LUFTWAFFE
BOYS! MUST BE FROM
THE AIRFIELD... THAT GIVES
ME AN IDEA! LET'S GO
BACK IN THEIR PLACE!

THE CAPTIVES WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR UNIFORMS AND BOUND HAND AND FOOT BEFORE THE STOVE.

WE COULD BE SHOT FOR WEARING THESE ... BUT IT'S A GOOD IDEA, BRAINS. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH THE AIRFIELD NOW WITHOUT BEING QUESTIONED!



THEY WOULD SHOOT US ANYWAY! LET'S GET MOVING ...

THESE JERRIES CAN HOG THE STOVE UNTIL THEY ARE DISCOVERED.

THE FOUR FRIENDS CONTINUED THEIR JOURNEY...AS LUFTWAFFE SKI-TRIPPERS ...

NOW TO LOOK OVER THAT AIRFIELD. THERE ARE ONLY FOUR OF US ... BUT SOMEHOW WE MUST PUT THE PLACE OUT OF ACTION.



Chapter 4. **COMMANDO ATTACK**

AT THE AIRFIELD COLONEL ZIMMER HEARD THE NEWS THAT COMMANDOS WERE NEAR HIS BASE. WITH THE CONVOY ATTACK SET FOR THE FOLLOWING MORNING, HE COULD TAKE NO CHANCES.

AFTER SEVERAL RUNNING BATTLES, HERR COLONEL, MY MEN KILLED FOUR OF THESE BRITISH THUGS. ONE WAS TAKEN ALIVE. UNDER PRESSURE HE CLAIMED THEY HAD LANDED TO ENCOURAGE NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE. BUT AT LEAST THREE OF THEM ARE AT LARGE

I SHALL ORDER THE GUARDS HERE TO BE READY IN CASE THIS IS MORE SERIOUS THAN WE THINK. WE CANNOT RISK AN ATTACK--NOT AT THIS TIME!

AT THAT MOMENT NELSON AND HIS STALWARTS HAD ARRIVED AT THE WIRE SURROUNDING THE AIRFIELD!

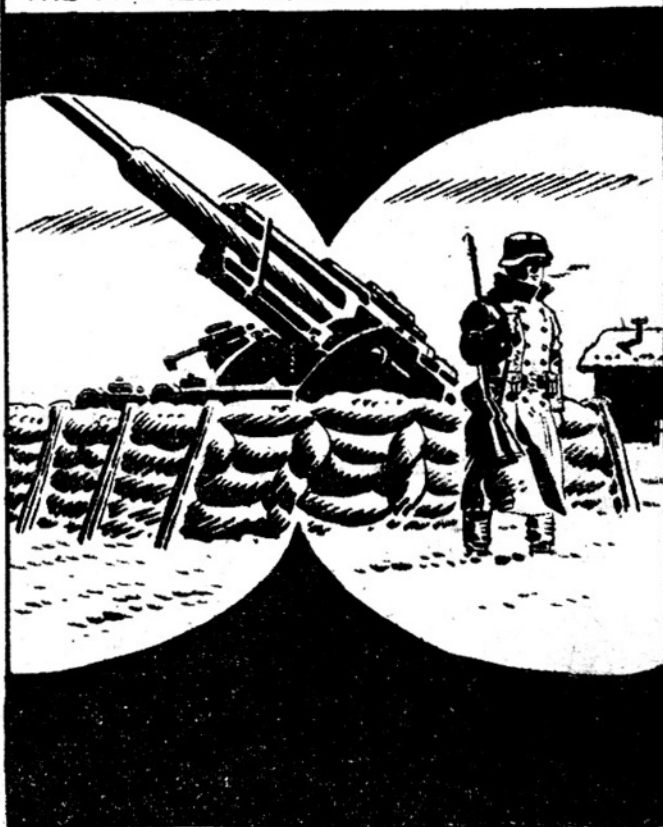
THOSE AIRCRAFT ARE TOO SPREAD OUT AND WELL GUARDED FOR US FOUR TO TACKLE ... WE HAVE TO THINK OUT A WAY TO EVEN THE ODDS!



LET'S GET TO THAT JERRY EIGHTY-EIGHT MILLIMETRE GUN! WITH IT WE COULD WRECK THE OFFICERS' BILLET... IF WE CAN'T GET TO THE AIRCRAFT -- LET'S GET THE PILOTS! THEY SHOULD BE TUCKED UP BY NOW!



WITH RENEWED INTEREST, NELSON TRAINED HIS BINOCULARS TOWARDS THE AIRFIELD AGAIN.



THE PLAN FULLER HAD CONCEIVED BECAME CLEAR TO THE OTHERS ...

IT'S AN EIGHTY-EIGHT ALL RIGHT! JUST ONE GUARD, TOO! IF WE COULD GET TO THAT...

... WE COULD REALLY HIT THOSE BOCHE DEVILS!



THEN, THE FOUR MEN WERE DISTURBED BY THE UNEXPECTED ROAR OF AN APPROACHING MOTOR VEHICLE...

IT WILL BE THE SUPPLY TRUCK BRINGING FRESH FISH FROM HAMMERFEST...



THE SIGHT OF THE TRUCK GERMINATED ANOTHER IDEA IN FULLER'S FERTILE BRAIN...

THEY'RE STUCK IN A DRIFT!

...AND THERE IS OUR PASSPORT TO THE AIRFIELD!



THE TWO GERMANS WITH THE TRUCK GRUMBLED AS THEY DUG AT THE SNOW-DRIFT THAT HAD DELAYED THEM.



SILENTLY AND SWIFTLY,
THE COMMANDOS STRUCK...



WORKING WITH A WILL, THE COMMANDOS SOON FREED THE TRUCK AND IT CONTINUED ITS JOURNEY ... BUT WITH A DIFFERENCE !

JUST DRIVE UP AS IF YOU WERE DELIVERING THE FISH FOR TOMORROW'S BREAKFAST, COMRADES ... AND *NO* TRICKS !



THE TRUCK ENTERED THE CAMP GATES ... THEN, ON FULLER'S SNAPPED ORDER, RUMBLLED TOWARDS THE 88 M.M. GUN EMPLACEMENT ...

HIMMEL ! HAS HELMUTH LOST HIS SENSES ? THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO THE COOKHOUSE ...

ACHTUNG !
THERE ARE MEN
IN THE REAR OF
THAT TRUCK !



THE FOUR ATTACKERS HURLED THEMSELVES FROM THE TRUCK AS IT PASSED THE GUN ...

LET'S GET THAT GUN INTO ACTION!



WITHIN SECONDS THE GUARD WAS DISPOSED OF AND THE 88 M.M. LOADED AND TRAINED TOWARDS THE PILOTS' QUARTERS

ON TARGET!

THIS IS IT FIRE!



FOUR SHELLS RIPPED SAVAGELY IN QUICK SUCCESSION INTO THE HEART OF THE BUILDING ... AND INSIDE PANIC AND UTTER CONFUSION REIGNED!

EVERYONE
REMAIN
CALM!

AAEEGH!
THE ROOF ... IT'S
COLLAPSING!



SUDDENLY, WITH A SHATTERING CRASH, THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING CAVED INWARDS... BUT NOW NELSON AND HIS MEN HAD COME UNDER A HEAVY RETURN FIRE!

THERE SHE GOES!
THOSE JERRIES WON'T
FEEL MUCH LIKE
FLYING BY THE
TIME THEY GET
OUT OF *THAT*!

SAVE YOUR BREATH!
WE'RE GOING TO BE
RUSHED... *RIGHT*
NOW!

THE UNDISCIPLINED RUSH OF THE LUFTWAFFE GUARDS WAVERED BEFORE THE COMBINED FIRE OF THE FOUR VETERANS... BUT A NEW, DEADLIER, FOE APPEARED...

BACK!
THE TANK
WILL FINISH
THOSE DEVILS!



NELSON AND FULLER SCRAMBLED BACK TO THEIR GUN POSITIONS...
AND THE '88 M.M. ROARED INTO ACTION AS THE GERMAN TANK
FIRED ITS SECOND SHELL AT THE EMPLACEMENT...



... BOTH SHELLS STRUCK HOME!



THE FOUR DAZED MEN FORCED THEMSELVES TO THEIR FEET TO SEE THE DISABLED TANK STILL CLANKING TOWARDS THEIR SHATTERED GUN POSITION ...



... THE CREWLESS TANK BURIED ITS STEEL NOSE IN THE SANDBAGGED EMPLACEMENT ...

THAT TANK... IT COULD BE OUR WAY OUT OF HERE! I'LL SEE IF IT CAN STILL BE STEERED!



UNDER HEAVY FIRE, FULLER SCRAMBLED THROUGH THE HATCH OF THE TANK. THE CONTROLS STILL WORKED! HIS GRINNING FACE QUICKLY REAPPEARED . . .

SHE GOES! ALL ABOARD THE SKYLARK!

... ONE MORE GO AT THESE DEVILS!



LAFARGE'S BULLETS CUT THROUGH THE ADVANCING GERMANS LIKE A SCYTHE! BUT A WELL-AIMED BLAST FROM A SENTRY TOWER STRUCK THE FRENCHMAN MORTALLY...

THEY'VE GOT LAFARGE!

LEAVE ME, ED! THIS IS IT... GOOD LUCK, BOYS!

NOTHING COULD BE DONE FOR THE DYING FRENCHMAN. THE TANK ROARED ACROSS THE AIRFIELD... AND BEHIND IT, THE GALLANT LAFARGE FIRED HIS LAST SHOTS...

STEER FOR THE AIRCRAFT... WE'LL GET SOME FOR LAFARGE!

HANG ON TO YOUR HATS!



UNDER NELSON'S GUIDANCE, FULLER WEAVED THE TANK TOWARDS THE OPPOSITE WIRE OF THE AIRFIELD PERIMETER ... BEHIND, IT LEFT A TRAIL OF WRECKED AIRCRAFT AND SHAKEN GROUND CREW.

HEAD FOR THAT HANGAR!
WE'LL WARM THINGS UP
FOR THESE FROZEN
SQUAREHEADS... THEN GO
THROUGH THE WIRE!



CORPORAL NELSON LOBBED HIS LAST GRENADE NEATLY AT THE PYRAMID OF PETROL DRUMS...

FULL SPEED, BRAINS!
LET'S GET AWAY
FROM HERE!

EEEEAAAGH!
THE PETROL!
RUN FOR YOUR
LIVES!



LEAVING THE WRECKED AND BURNING AIRFIELD BEHIND, THE TANK PLUNGED THROUGH THE WIRE INTO DEEP SNOW...

THEY DON'T SEEM TO LIKE US!

IT HAS BEEN GOOD KNOWING YOU... NOW LET US GET SOME MORE OF THEM!

MAKE EVERY BULLET COUNT!



BUT EVEN AS THE GERMANS CLOSED IN FOR THE KILL, OTHERS TOOK A PART IN THE DESPERATE FIGHT.

FORWARD!
THESE ARE INDEED FRIENDS WHO NEED OUR HELP!

IT WAS A PATROL OF NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE MEN.



THE ALREADY DEMORALISED
GERMANS FELL BACK UNDER THE
HOT FIRE OF THE NORWEGIAN
SKI PATROLLERS

MY FRIEND OF
THE SKI PATROL.
NEVER WAS A SIGHT
MORE WELCOME!

TALK LATER,
YOU TWO...LET'S
GET AWAY FROM
HERE. I'VE GOT A
DATE WITH A
SUBMARINE!



GUIDED SWIFTLY AND EXPERTLY BY THE NORWEGIANS, NELSON AND FULLER HAD REACHED THEIR RENDEZVOUS WITH *SAILFISH* BEFORE DAWN...

WE CAN NEVER FORGET YOU ...
AND WE'LL BE BACK... TO HELP
YOU DRIVE THE GERMANS
OUT OF NORWAY FOR EVER!

SUBMARINE
SURFACING !

NEVER THOUGHT
I'D BE QUITE SO
GLAD TO SEE
HER AGAIN !

THE TWO WEARY COMMANDOS THANKFULLY BOARDED THE *SAILFISH*. IT SEEMED A LIFETIME SINCE THEY HAD LEFT HER BUT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS BEFORE ...

...ONLY TWO OF
YOU, CORPORAL ?

YES, SIR ! BUT YOU
CAN RADIO LONDON
THAT THE AIRFIELD CAME
OFF WORST IN THIS DEAL !
**COMMANDOS DIE
HARD !**



AND WITHIN A FEW HOURS OF THE COMMANDOS' EXPLOIT, A LARGE CONVOY ROUNDED NORTH CAPE ON THEIR VITAL JOURNEY TO RUSSIA
FREE FROM AIR ATTACK!

THIS IS WHERE WE USUALLY GET THE WHOLE JERRY AIR FORCE AFTER US... WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENED TO 'EM?

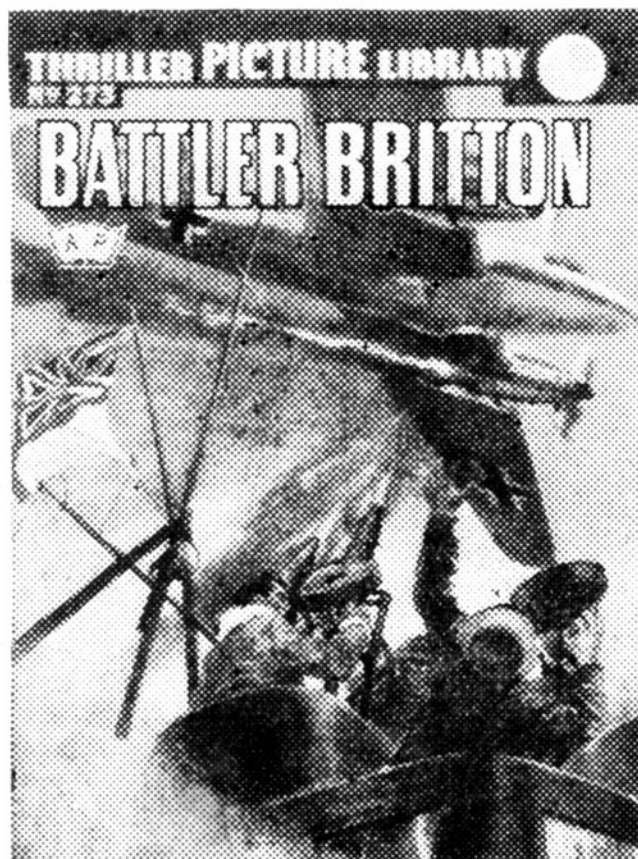
WE'LL REALLY DELIVER THE GOODS THIS TRIP! HERE'S TO WHATEVER'S STOPPED THOSE HUN BOMBERS!



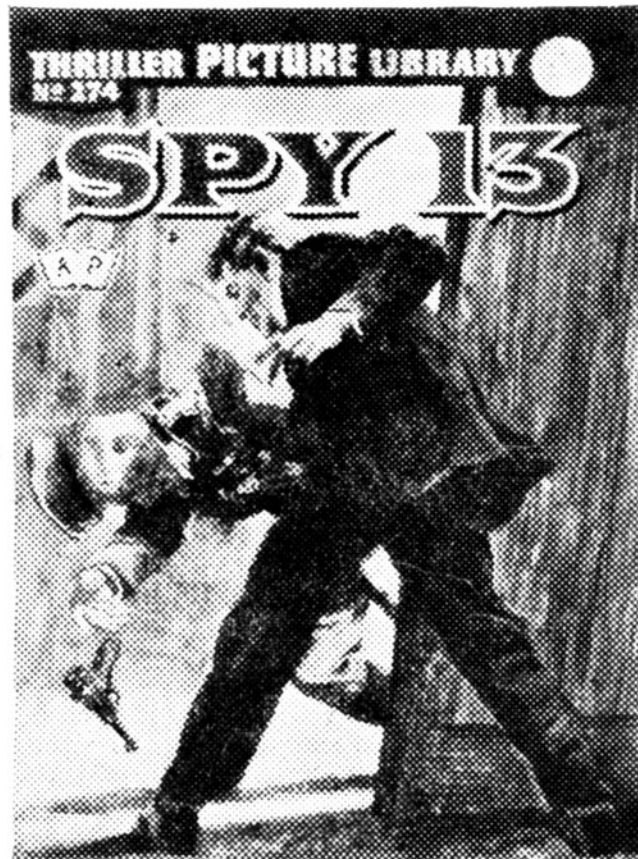
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